



Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

Update – June 2004

I thought it would be a good time to update you about our planning efforts and to try to dispel several rumors about the BLM having selected an agency preferred alternative.

We've used the public comments so many provided earlier to help create six alternatives to analyze in the draft environmental impact statement (one that reflects current management and five other possible alternative scenarios).

For several months we've been working to select various portions of these six alternatives to form a preliminary preferred alternative. Our preliminary preferred alternative seems to change daily as we refine the specifics of each alternative.

We also asked the Central Montana Resource Advisory Council (RAC) to participate in forming a preliminary preferred alternative. Their past several meetings have been devoted mostly to this task. The RAC has been able to agree on some recommendations, but not on others. This may reflect how differently and strongly people feel about how to manage these BLM lands in the future.

Our council meetings always offer a public comment period and many of you have also offered sound management ideas during these meetings.

We also have cooperating agencies (the State of Montana and the four counties that encompass part of the monument) participating in our planning efforts and our planning meetings are open to the public.

Jerry Majerus and I have also given a number of presentations and hosted meetings with numerous interests and individuals during this phase of our planning effort. We will continue meeting with groups or individuals when asked.

With few exceptions, involving the public creates better products for the BLM. However, this public process has also inadvertently created the impression with some that a preferred alternative has already been selected.

I want to assure you that identifying a preferred alternative is a work in progress that will continue through most of this year.

I appreciate your interest and urge you to stay involved as we create tomorrow's management guidelines for these BLM lands. For additional information, please visit our website at www.mt.blm.gov/ldo/um.

Sincerely,

Gary Slagel
Monument Manager